

RKM ↓

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Dear Josh,

It's always good to hear from you -- if only in the form of succinct marginalia. In this most recent instance, you've also put me onto a book I hadn't noticed on "public images of science" as well as a case of my having been semi-quoted rather than wholly obliterated. We are agreed, I take it, that full *OBI* (obliteration of source by incorporation in canonical knowledge) can be taken as the ultimate (though often inadvertent) accolade to work-well-done in the sphere of science and scholarship. I was a bit surprised to learn that I was being quoted from an alleged "1937 speech" until I recalled that the quotation was being taken from a paper read in a session of the then American Sociological Society which I somehow never thought of as a "speech." And I describe this as a *semi*-quotation since it quotes selectively to omit the italicized phrase in what was for me the main import of the final, paradoxical sentence in the ¶: "The borrowed authority of science becomes a powerful prestige symbol *for unscientific doctrines*." Finally, I fail to appreciate the quoting author's transmutation of my term *laity* into the politically correct *layperson* in his interpretative text. Otherwise, I take that would-be quotation as reasonably sound.

All this provides yet another reminder that I really should get to complete those long-contemplated papers on *OBI* and on *patterned misunderstandings in science and scholarship*. Which won't happen, I suspect, until two conditions are met: my assaults of Ménière's cease and my moral obligation to contribute to a still incomplete series of *Festschriften* for onetime students (let alone onetime colleagues) is fully discharged. I've thus far managed to contribute to only two of the projected five honorific volumes for former students: Peter Blau, PhD '52 and Lew Coser, '54, with Rose Coser '57, Jim Coleman '55, and Marty Lipset '49 or '50 now in the making. If you have gotten this far in my inventory of mixed blessings, you may agree that Columbia sociology must have had a spectacular vintage decade back then, with still others from the '40s and '50s and soon the '60s bound to be heard from. Since publishers have become loath to publish *Festschriften* unless they have a well-defined unifying theme, these alien-theme-specific papers take me from further work on my own queue of books and papers clamoring for attention.

As you must have gathered, the preceding ¶ is addressed rather more to me than to you. Perhaps as prelude to a sensible solution.

Harriet comes by and joins in affectionate regards to you both.

Blau